1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

price at this time of year for nearly everything, including weddings and bride-wealth, goes up.

When all the exchanges are completed everyone participating in a wedding gets some present of money, food, and clothing. The *luwali*, especially at first marriages, gets the bulk of the bridewealth and distributes the rest to the girl's family both on her mother's and her father's side. After the first marriage the girl tends to keep more and more of the bridewealth for herself, giving the *luwali* what amounts to a fee for serving as the official bride-giver. It is also important to note that when there are disputes between a husband and wife, the first person to whom both turn for arbitration is the *luwali*.

The Kanuri think of getting married in several ways. First of all they divide all marriages into first marriages (to take a girl or a small girl), and secondary marriages with a divorced woman (to take a woman or to take a divorced woman). First marriages take place for a girl around the time of puberty, while boys do not marry until they are in their late teens or early twenties, and young men of twenty-eight and twenty-nine who have not yet been married are not hard to find.

An interesting sidelight on marriage with previously unmarried young girls is the ambivalence men feel about it. Men obtain much prestige from such a marriage. But its cost invariably puts a man into great debt, and consummation of the marriage itself, traditionally, is a semi-public affair in which old women related to the girl sit outside the marriage hut and whisper to their newly-wed relative that she must resist the advances of her husband. They do this until very late at night or until they are given some proof of the girl's virginity by the husband. They then make a fearful clatter in the town or village to announce the premarital chastity of their young relative. Standards of personal appearance and sexual attraction are important to Kanuri men and center on more sexually mature women. Such standards deal with hair style, facial symmetry, type of walk, and other physical attributes and skills, as well as ability at wifely chores. None of these attributes are in any degree well-developed among young girls, so that the man must control himself and almost publicly proclaim his manhood and sexual prowess with a young girl who is not defined as sexually exciting by the culture. This causes much anxiety and I have seen men praying almost continually for several weeks in order to gain the strength to carry out a virgin's consummation. It is important to note that when some western educated Kanuri talk about marriage they immediately fasten on this semi-public consummation of the girl's first marriage as a custom that will be dropped in the future, and certainly one they do not intend to carry out or even allow in their lives. From the girl's point of view, as education in western-style schools becomes more common and the length of time in school increases, then the time of first marriage for the girls will move ahead. At present however there are only a handful of Kanuri girls who attend schools beyond the age of traditional marriage.

But what is the basis for the conflict? Why are men willing to suffer to gain such an unattractive wife? Men always explain it in the same way. A young girl has never been touched sexually by other men; he is the first; he can train her as he likes, and teach her to be a proper wife to suit his own personal wishes. Besides, it is a good Muslim custom, they always add, as they do about almost every custom when they are asked. In this case they are correct, for such young marriages are very

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it refers to a family event, such as Gambo, "the person who was born after twins." Names, then, reflect many of the social relationships and social circumstances of the individual being named and his relationship to those around him. However, the main point of the naming ceremony is quite clear. As one Kanuri put it,

> We celebrate the naming because the child and the family are fortunate; the infant has escaped death and entered successfully into life; it is therefore a joyful occasion.

Infancy

For the first eighteen months of his life a child is referred to exclusively as *tifal* or new-born infant without anyone referring to its age. The period marks the beginning of the infant's membership in society and its most obvious sign is breast-feeding. Perhaps the best single word to describe the infant period is that of "introduction," for during these first few months the baby is introduced to the family, to friends of the family, the neighborhood, the ward, indeed to the community as a whole.

Any jealousy or antagonism felt towards the new baby by its older brothers and sisters is recognized as such and dealt with firmly but gently. Even cats are supposed to be jealous of new babies and are prevented by adults from coming near them. Very often an older brother or sister is sent away from the house to a nearby compound during the period of the birth, especially if there is a grandparent living close by. On the day of the naming ceremony all the older children in the family up to the age of ten receive little gifts in honor of the occasion. At one ceremony we saw a little boy of two and a half being brought back from the grandparent's house where he had been living for about a week. He was brought to the new infant and told, "This is our new baby. Be kind to him and look after him." All the children of the household were given little gifts that same day and told the same thing. After the ceremony was over many of the women in the compound devoted some time to playing with the children and showing them affection. Everyone pointed out repeatedly what a fine thing it was for the children to have a new brother in the family. If during the next few weeks the older children should show any signs of hostility they are sent away again to another compound for periods up to a month or two. At this new compound they are told again and again about the necessity of showing affection and being responsible for younger brothers and sisters. In other words, "sibling rivalry" is understood, anticipated, and dealt with in a way that reduces tensions and calmly recognizes the normality of an older child's jealousy when all attention turns to a new baby in the family.

The new infant spends most of its first eighteen months with its mother. However, short sorties with older sisters occur now and then. On the other hand, the father has very little to do with the child at this stage, although he often comes by to see it. The baby soon learns to sit quietly while it is swaddled in a straddling-sitting position on its mother's back. Toilet training at this stage is minimal. The mother, rather than the child, tries to learn when the child is likely to urinate. At first the child is merely wiped clean by the mother, but as soon as it can sit up, it is placed astride her ankles with its back resting on her upturned feet. A little hole is

586 779 for swearing falsely. The wife, however, is in a powerful position since she can continue to make life unpleasant for her husband in a variety of ways. She can take to going out a lot, on a variety of pretexts. One day she may visit a friend; another day it may be her "sick cousin." The husband will become increasingly more jealous and enraged at being unable to control his wife's behavior, and may eventually capitulate and grant her a divorce involving an agreement concerning return of the luwaliram.

Children under whatever circumstances of divorce belong to the father, though the father must leave them with their mother until they are weaned. They then come to live with him.

[55] If a husband has divorced his wife and therefore has not had the luwaliram returned to him, he may take back all the gifts that he gave to his wife during the course of their marriage: jewelry, clothing, household goods, etc. If the wife has paid back the luwaliram in order to obtain a divorce, the husband has no claim to the presents which he gave her. If a kalə yaskə wishes to divorce her husband, she must pay him a great deal more than a zogor would pay, since the luwaliram for her was so much greater.

586 578 • 152 The Kanuri talk about <u>boye</u>, a jealous curiosity which a husband or a wife may feel towards one's divorced spouse. This involves longing to return to a former spouse, looking to see what the divorced spouse is presently doing, and curiosity as to whether she or he has new lovers. Boye may reach the point

586 where a former spouse might attack his wife's new lover with a
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• 152 knife.

3. Residence.

591 It is usually stated that after marriage, a boy's father
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369 builds his house for him if he is able to, and he builds his
183 son's house close to his own. This is subject to a number of qualifications, the foremost being the all-pervading difference between rural and urban Kanuri culture. In the rural villages the ideal is frequently realized, and the son marries and lives
[606] not far from the house of his mother and father. His wives then prepare meals for their mother- and father-in-law, as well as for their husband. The old mother continues to cook for her husband, but her daughter-in-law sends her additional food as well. However, if there is no plot of land on which to build a house adjacent to his father's house, the son's house may be built any place else. If the boy's father is dead, his mother may build the house for him, or he may work and earn money with which he may build his own house. If the boy's father is a poor man and has no money for building his son's house, his son may leave the village, marry elsewhere, and build his house in another village or another town. If he marries a girl whose father is a rich man, the father-in-law may build a house for his daughter and her husband, though it is much more common for the father of the boy to build the house. If a man with a rich farm has several daughters and no sons, his sons-in-law may come to live near his house and help him farm.

593 595 for weekly household expenses. If one is given a gift, the other must also be given a gift of equal value. No sign of preference of a public nature may be shown. Finances of husband and wife are maintained separately. Money earned by the wife through her own activities (for example, through trading) belongs to her, and she may spend her own money as she wishes.

Though the polygamous family has a certain overall organization, particularly in the structuring of relationships between co-wives, with a senior wife as head wife, it is also evident that each nuclear family within the household exists as a separate entity. The individual distinctiveness of the nuclear family can be seen in the emphasis on separate and isolated houses for each wife, in the discreet units of time which the husband is required to spend with each wife (he sleeps with each in turn and she cooks for him on that day), and in the separate and equal treatment which he is required to give each wife (equality of market money, equality of gifts). Emphasis on the distinctiveness of each nuclear family functions to preserve the identity of each wife and to stress her worth to her husband, the head of the household. It thus serves to inhibit jealousy, a divisive force which, if permitted direct expression, would shatter the unity of the household. Jealousy between co-wives finds expression in a number of less direct ways; it is not permitted to erupt into quarreling, cursing or fighting (though these certainly occur), and above all the husband must do everything in his power to avoid actions which might encourage jealousies between his wives.

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000 ousies between his wives.

59 The separate nuclear families which make up the larger polygamous Kanuri family demonstrate an overall unity when one focuses attention on the household as a structural group. At the core of the household is the polygamous family, but the household may include many other individuals, both kin and non-kin.

595 855 Polygamous families also appear much more unified when one attends to the behavior of adults towards children within [152] the household. Though the presence of children is potentially the greatest source of jealousy between co-wives, particularly when one wife has borne one or more children while another has never borne a child, Kanuri attitudes and treatment of children within the household minimizes these jealousies. All women within reach of a child play with it, feed it, and watch over it. Children wander freely in and out of the houses of their father's wives (their ya chinta), and differences between co-wives are not permitted to extend to their children. In effect, children bridge rather than emphasize the gaps between co-wives and between nuclear families.

5. The Household.

592 It is a natural step to move from a consideration of the polygamous family, the central kin group in Kanuri society, to that of the household. However, though the household has the polygamous family at its core, it is not primarily a kin group.

602 elicited with little difficulty:

[682] [683] It is the father's family that is responsible for the dia (blood-money, compensation to a non-group member and his group for physicalinjuries or death brought about by the activity of own group members), they will support you if you get into trouble, it is from them that you get your property, if you marry and have no money, they will collect it for you, and you don't have to pay it back, but you will help them when asked for other people in the family - they are the mai durbe (king of the families).

Upper class members made the following generalisation in their statements about the father's family: they felt that the great utility of the patrilateral group is its readiness to support an individual member when he is in trouble, and of course its eventual material use to him in terms of property.

When informants were asked at some other time about the matrilateral kin group without any reference to the father's family and in the context of a conversation having to do with loans and credit, the answer was similar to the following given by a small hamlet farmer:

> Oh yes, for these things (credit) you must go to your mother's family, they will not refuse you anything, for they feel for you like a mother feels for her child.

Upper class members observed similarly that if summa kalewa (if all was well) then people like their mother's family better, it is more [184] affectionate. They also felt that it might be easier to borrow money from the matrilateral groups but were not as unanimous in this respect as the lower class member (neither class was completely unanimous).

[152] In answer to questions about jealousy (kẽndulí) differences, all informants agreed that there was much more of this among the patrilateral group. One informant expanded this as follows:

603 that is your wife, is it?, or to her - that is your husband, eh?
[152] All the restrictions on any show of emotion with own parents are noticeable by their absence in the affective nature of the grandparent joking relationship with its openly expressible fondness and friendship. That there is some discipline involved is indicated by the fact that the child is very often socialised in a grandparent's
[962] house. One grandparent was observed very patiently taking the left hand of his little namesake out of the food bowl, every time the child attempted to eat with this taboo instrument. One adult informant summed up his own attitudes towards the relationship as follows:

> You may pull your kaka's (grandparent's) beards, or go into his house and take his possessions, and he will not mind - he is happy because his children have borne children. If you have a yeiya (great-grandparent) alive, it is the same with him.

[602]
[553] Although the suli (joking) relationship holds for all members of the second and third ascendant and descendant generations it focuses for an individual in its most memorable and frequently emphasized form, between himself and his grandparent-namesake, his
603 chuwuna. Many Kanuri names are convertible from male to female
553 forms and thus, cases of a grandchild named after a grandparent of
[551] opposite sex are known. The important point is that the chuwuna (namesake) relationship is most often associated with the practise
553 of grandparent joking relations and possible adoptions. This obser-
571 vation is validated by looking at other chuwuna relationships in the kinship system or between close friends. If a child is named after a father's brother or his father's friend, he and that person have a mildly permissive joking relationship. They address each

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[586] The value placed upon maintenance of connection with her own family after marriage is given by women as one of the reasons for divorce - "he would not let me visit my family" - which indicates that this value is somewhat in conflict with the other value attributes of adult female behaviour during marriage. In some marriages of long duration and much mutual trust, the woman's visits to her relatives were observed to be a normal, accepted and non-conflicting part of her role as wife to her husband. However, most men are somewhat reluctant to allow their wives to visit relatives and try to discourage such activity. High ranking persons send along a trusted servant to remain with or near their wives during the entire term of [152] absence from the compound. One informant, by no means an exception, became incensed because he heard that his wife (age about thirty-five, married and divorced several times before) who was travelling alone to Maiduguri to visit a sister, had stopped for two days in an intermediate town to visit other relatives and friends. A former husband of the woman lived there and the present husband was extremely worried lest his wife was having a licentious time while away.

Old Age

886 Old age is signalled by white hair for both sexes. Even though sexual potency may remain, this outward sign of white hair identifies the coming of the last period of life for both men (chiari, 888 old men) and women (kamursu, old woman). In both sexes old age means the relinquishing of some of the duties of adulthood though the man continues longer in his adult role than the woman. This is due to the increasing difficulty which an old woman finds in obtaining a husband if she has been widowed or divorced in later years. If she has a son he is expected to keep her in his compound; if not, she may

556 so openly about his own financial matters and property to the incessant
183 questions which were thrown at him. They insisted that this would only
(123) lead to a multiplication of requests for gifts of money, clothes, food,
(251) and loans. Again, this is one of the reasons the Kanuri give for having both above and below ground storage pits for food crops. A household head is very reluctant to ever discuss exactly how many storage pits he has in his compound or how much of last year's crops remains uneaten. If this information can be obtained at all, much assurance has to be given that it is to be kept entirely confidential.

But the conflict over the proper consumption of wealth by self or others for status validation is not completely solved by covert
(152) savings. Since the values of the society are, to some extent, always the values of a majority of its individual members, this confict takes place both in the individual's social and his psychological life, and is in this writer's opinion, one of the main sources of anxiety among the individual members of Kanuri society.

Rural/Urban

369 Although rural or urban status can be changed by residence,
829 there is a differentiation, more sharply made by upper class city dwellers, between "bush" (rural) people and urban dwellers. City people feel themselves to be more "advanced" and sophisticated, better informed, and more socially mobile than the rural population whom the city dwellers consider to be ignorant, dirty and untrustworthy. The rural people make much less distinction between urban and rural residence, although they all know that there are many "wonderful" things in the city, such as the cinema, or the Maiduguri market where goods from all over the world are on sale daily. Another difference noticeable immediately to the